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RUSKIN AND ALFRED'S PRAYER.

In 1885, three lectures delivered by RUSKIN in Oxford were published under the title, 'The Pleasures of England.' In the second of these, entitled "The Pleasures of Faith," occurs the following passage :

"Remember in their successive order,—of monks, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Martin, St. Benedict, and St. Gregory; of kings,—and your national vanity may be surely enough appeased in recognizing two of them for Saxon,—Theodoric, Charlemagne, Alfred, Canute, and the Confessor. I will read three passages to you, out of the literal words of three of these ten men, without saying whose they are, that you may compare them with the best and most exalted you have read expressing the philosophy, the religion, and the policy of to-day."

This he accordingly proceeds to do, quoting first an extract from AUGUSTINE'S 'City of God.' Then he adds: "This for the philosophy. Next, I take for example of the Religion of our ancestors, a prayer, personally and passionately offered to the Deity conceived as you have this moment heard.

'O Thou who art the Father of that Son which has awakened us, and yet urgeth us out of the sleep of our sins, and exhorteth us that we become Thine;' (note you that, for apprehension of what Redemption means, against your base and cowardly modern notion of 'scaping whipping. Not to take away the Punishment of Sin, but by His Resurrection to raise us out of the sleep of sin itself! Compare the legend at the feet of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah in the golden Gospel of Charles le Chauve:—

"HIC LEO SURGENDO PORTAS CONFREGIT AVERNI
QUI NUNQUAM DORMIT, NUSQUAM DORMITAT IN ÆVUM;")

'To Thee, Lord, I pray, who art the supreme truth; for all the truth that is, is truth from Thee. Thee I implore, O Lord, who art the highest wisdom. Through Thee are wise all those that are so. Thou art the true life, and through Thee are living all those that are so. Thou art the supreme felicity, and from Thee all have become happy that are so. Thou art the highest good, and from Thee all beauty springs. Thou art the intellectual light, and from Thee man derives his understanding.

To Thee, O God, I call and speak. Hear, O hear me, Lord! for Thou art my God and my Lord; my Father and my Creator; my ruler and my hope; my wealth and my honor; my house, my country, my salvation, and my life! Hear, hear me, O Lord! Few of Thy servants comprehend Thee. But Thee alone I love,† indeed, above all other things. Thee

† Meaning—not that he is of those few, but that, without comprehending, at least, as a dog, he can love.

I seek: Thee I will follow: Thee I am ready to serve. Under Thy power I desire to abide, for Thou alone art the Sovereign of all. I pray Thee to command me as Thou wilt."

Two pages further on he says: "The Philosophy is Augustine's; the Prayer Alfred's."

Though RUSKIN asserts that the prayer is ALFRED'S, I have found a curious parallel to it in the pages of a Latin writer, in fact no less a person than the AUGUSTINE from whom the Philosophy is extracted. That my readers may see how close the parallel is, I subjoin a part of AUGUSTINE'S prayer, omitting far the the larger part, and citing only so much as is relevant to this inquiry.

"Pater evigilationis atque illuminationis nostræ, pater pignoris quo admonemur redire ad te. Te invoco, Deus veritas, in quo et a quo et per quem vera sunt, quæ vera sunt omnia. Deus sapientia, in quo et a quo et per quem sapiunt, quæ sapiunt omnia. Deus vera et summa vita, in quo et a quo et per quem vivunt, quæ vere summeque vivunt omnia. Deus beatitudo, in quo et a quo et per quem beata sunt, quæ beata sunt omnia. Deus bonum et pulchrum, in quo et a quo et per quem bona et pulchra sunt, quæ bona et pulchra sunt omnia. Deus intelligibilis lux, in quo et a quo et per quem intelligibiliter lucent, quæ intelligibiliter lucent omnia. . . . Exaudi, exaudi, exaudi me, Deus meus, Domine meus, rex meus, pater meus, causa mea, spes mea, res mea, honor meus, domus mea, patria mea, salus mea, lux mea, vita mea. Exaudi, exaudi, exaudi me more illo tuo paucis notissimo. Jam te solum amo, te solum sequor, te solum quæro, tibi soli servire paratus sum, quia tu solus juste dominaris; tui juris esse cupio."

This passage is to be found in AUGUSTINE'S 'Soliloquies,' Bk. i, ch. i. (MIGNE, 'Patr. Lat.' xxxii, 869-872). But how then could it occur to RUSKIN to attribute it to ALFRED? Evidently because he found it among the writings ascribed by scholars to ALFRED. In truth, it is part of the so-called Anthology published by COCKAYNE in the 'Shrine,' pp. 163-204, our extract being found on pp. 166-9. Of this the translator is asserted to be ALFRED by Prof. WÜLKER, in his article on the subject in PAUL und BRAUNE'S *Beiträge* iv, 101-131, and his conclusion has not been seriously impugned.

ALFRED, then, merely translated this prayer from AUGUSTINE, yet RUSKIN speaks of it as "personally and passionately offered to

the Deity" by ALFRED, and thousands of people who read his book are likely to take him at his word. Yet it would scarcely seem that RUSKIN obtained his translation at second-hand. It is not identical with a rendering of part of the prayer by THOMAS HUGHES, in his 'Alfred the Great,' ch. 16, nor is it the same as the version in the Jubilee Edition of ALFRED's works. Besides, in both these places the original authorship of the prayer is clearly recognized, though HUGHES refers it to his "adaptation from St. AUGUSTINE's 'Blossom Gatherings,'" instead of from the 'Soliloquies,' thus showing a confusion of thought with respect to the two titles. But if RUSKIN did make the translation himself, he has not always seized upon the meaning of the original. It so happens that two of his inexact renderings are at points to which he has called special attention by comments. The first is after the words "exhorteth us that we become Thine," which is not what AUGUSTINE says, and just as little what ALFRED says: "ús mannað þæt wē tō þē becumen." The second is: "But Thee alone I love." Here RUSKIN takes pains to explain that the *but* does not carry one of its two natural meanings. This explanation, however, might have been spared, had he observed that the *but* is by no means the necessary translation of either the Latin or the Old English. The Latin has *jam*; the Old English runs: "þē ānne ic lufige sōðlice ofer æalle oðre þing."

Is it not a pity to spoil such effective rhetoric, and mar so telling an illustration? Perhaps; but there is a 'pity of it' on the other side, too, and it is one which will not have escaped the attentive reader of this note.

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ALFRED'S "PRAYER-MEN, WAR-MEN, AND WORK-MEN."

IN ALFRED's translation of 'Boethius,' chap. 17, occurs this sentence regarding a king: "He sceal habban gebedmen, and fyrdmen, and weorcmen." I think I have discovered that ALFRED must have had a Latin original for the three nouns, other than the seventh prose of the second book, which he

was nominally translating. The sentence occurs in the midst of a passage which has been regarded as among the most original in ALFRED's works, and perhaps there is no reason to doubt that, on the whole, it is so. But the "gebedmen, and fyrdmen, and weorcmen" must, I am convinced, translate the plurals of *orator*, *bellator*, and *laborator*, or their equivalents. The reason for this conclusion may briefly be shown. It is found in a comparison with two passages, one from ÆLFRIC 'On the New Testament,' or rather from a paragraph appended to that piece (L'ISLE, 'A Saxon Treatise,' pp. 40-41):

"Witan sceoldon sméagan mid wíslícum geþeahhte, þonne on mancinne tō micel yfel bið, hwilc ðæra steleenna þæs cinestōles wære tōbrocen, and bētan ðone sōna. Se cinestōl stynt on þisum prīm stelum: laboratores, bellatores, oratores. Laboratores sind yrðlingas and æhtemen, tō þām ānum betēhte, þe hig ús bigleofan tiliad. Oratores syndon þe ús ðingiað tō Gode, and cristendōm fyrðriad on cristenum folcum on Godes þéowdōm tō ðām gástlican gewinne, tō þām ānum betēhte ús eallum tō pearfe. Bellatores sindon þe úre burga healdað and éac úrum eard wið þone sigendne here, feohtende mid wēmmum, swá swá Paulus sáde, se þéoda lárēow, on his lárēowdōme: Non sine causa portat miles gladium, et cetera; 'Ne byrð ná se cniht bútan intingan his swurd.' Hē ys Godes þēn þē sylfum tō pearfe on ðām yfelum wyrcendum tō wræce gesett. On þisum prīm stelum stynt se cynestōl, and gif ān bið forud, he fylð áðin sōna, þām oðrum stelum tō unðearfe gewiss."

The other passage is from WULFSTAN'S Fiftieth Homily in NAPIER's edition (p. 267):

"Ælc riht cynestōl stent on prīm stapelum, þe fullice áriht stent: an is oratores, and oðer is laboratores, and þrydde is bellatores. Oratores syndon gebedmen, þe Gode sceolon þéowian dæges and nihtes for þæne cyngc, and for ealne þéodscipe þingian georne. Laboratores syndon weorcmen, þe tilian sceolon þæs, þe eall þéodscipe big sceal lybban. Bellatores syndon wigmēn, þe eard sculon wærian wíglíce mid wæpnum. On þysum prīm stapelum sceal ælc cynestol stāndan mid rihte; and, áwácyge heora ænig, sōna se stōl scylfð; and, fulberste heora ænig, þonne hrýst se stōl nyðer, and þæt wyrð þære þéode eall tō unþearfe. Ac stalige man and strangie and trymme hī georne mid wíslícra Godes lage and mid rihtlicra woroldlage; þæt wyrð þām þéodscipe tō langsuman ræde. And sōð is þæt wē secgað, áwácyge se cristendōm, sōna scylfð se cynedōm."